Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1.-20. (cancelled)

21. (currently amended) A transgenic plant comprising in its genome a transgene encoding a Flowering Locus C2 (FLC2) gene, the transgene coding for a polypeptide comprising SEQ ID NO:4, wherein expression of the transgene causes a delay in the onset of flowering in the transgenic plant compared to non-transgenic plants of the same species.

22. (currently amended) A seed of the transgenic plant of claim 21, wherein the seed comprises the transgene.

23. (currently amended) A seed for a transgenic plant, the seed comprising in its genome a transgene comprising a plant expressible promoter and an antisense coding region complementary to a protein coding region for a plant Flowering Locus C2 (FLC2) protein, the plant FLC2 protein (i) having a MADS box domain, (ii) being at least 5070% identical in amino acid sequence to the FLC2 protein, SEQ ID NO:4, outside of the region of the MADS box domain, and (iii) effective when expressed in transgenic plants to cause a delay in the onset of flowering in the transgenic plant as compared to a non-transgenic plant of the same genetic background.

24. (previously presented) A plant grown from the seed of claim 23.

25. (currently amended) An isolated nucleotide sequence comprising the a coding sequence for the a FLC2 gene, wherein the coding sequence is defined by SEQ ID NO:3.

26. (Currently amended) An isolated DNA sequence comprising a DNA sequence encoding the FLC2 protein, wherein the ~~sequence~~ <u>FLC2 protein</u> is defined by SEQ ID NO:4.

27. (currently amended) A genetic construction comprising a plant expressible promoter operably connected to <u>an isolated</u> protein coding sequence for a protein of the Flowering Locus C2 (FLC2) gene, the plant FLC2 protein (i) having a MADS box domain, (ii) being at least ~~50~~<u>70</u>% identical in amino acid sequence to ~~the FLC2~~ (SEQ ID NO:4) ~~protein,~~ and (iii) effective when expressed in transgenic plants to cause a delay in the onset of flowering in the transgenic plant as compared to a non-transgenic plant of the same genetic background.

28. (cancelled)

29. (currently amended) A transgenic plant comprising a transgene encoding a member of the plant Flowering Locus C2 (FLC2) protein, the plant FLC2 protein (i) having a MADS box domain, (ii) being at least ~~50~~<u>70</u>% identical in amino acid sequence to ~~the FLC2~~ (SEQ ID NO:4) ~~protein,~~ and (iii) effective when expressed in transgenic plants to cause a delay in the onset of flowering in the transgenic plant as compared to a non-transgenic plant of the same genetic background.

30. (currently amended) A method of producing a transgenic plant with altered flowering characteristics comprising: contacting a plant cell with a transgene comprising a plant expressible promoter and a protein coding sequence encoding a plant Flowering Locus C2 (FLC2) gene protein, the plant FLC2 protein (i) having a MADS box domain, (ii) being at least ~~50~~70% identical in amino acid sequence to ~~the FLC2~~ (SEQ ID NO:4~~) protein~~, and (iii) effective when expressed in transgenic plants to cause a delay in the onset of flowering in the transgenic plant as compared to a non-transgenic plant of the same genetic background; identifying a plant cell carrying the inserted transgene; regenerating a transgenic plant from the plant cell, wherein the transgenic plant exhibits at least about 10% more leaves than a non-transgenic plant of the same genetic background without the transgene, wherein the number of leaves is determined when the transgenic plant and the non-transgenic plant are being grown under the same conditions.